



Strengthening Health and Safety Integration in a National Law Enforcement Organization

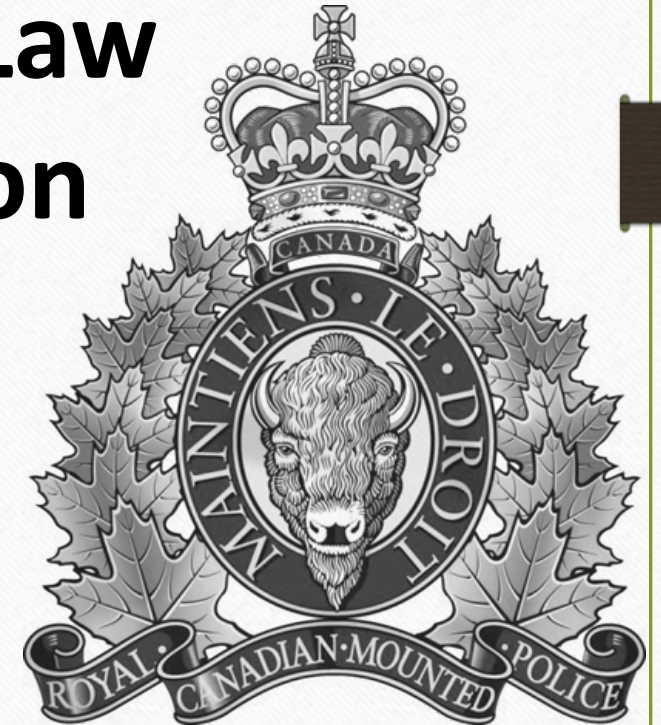
The RCMP's Journey

Christine Joli-Coeur & Janina Blank

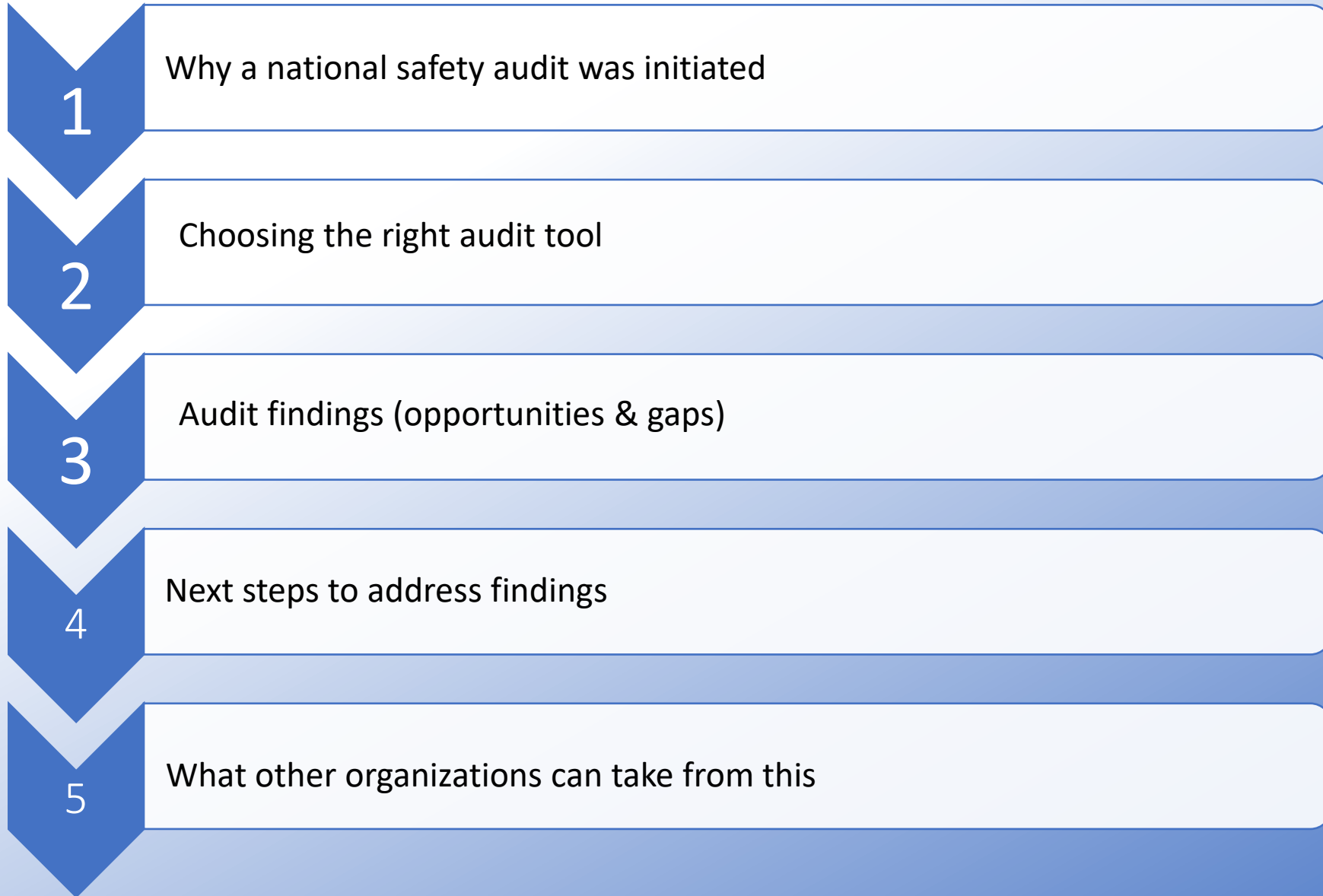
National Occupational Safety Officers

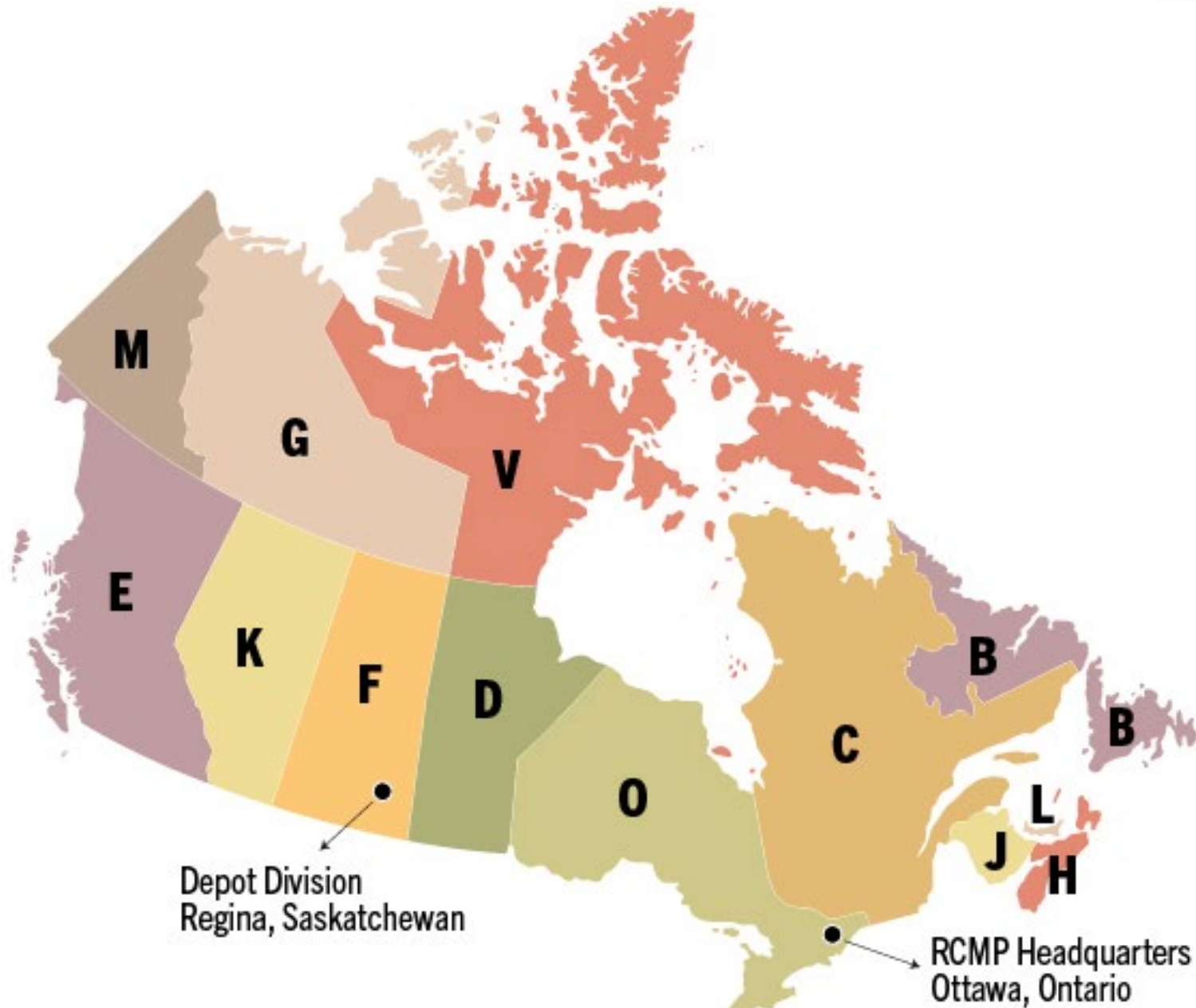
Occupational Safety and Prevention Directorate at the RCMP

June 17, 2026

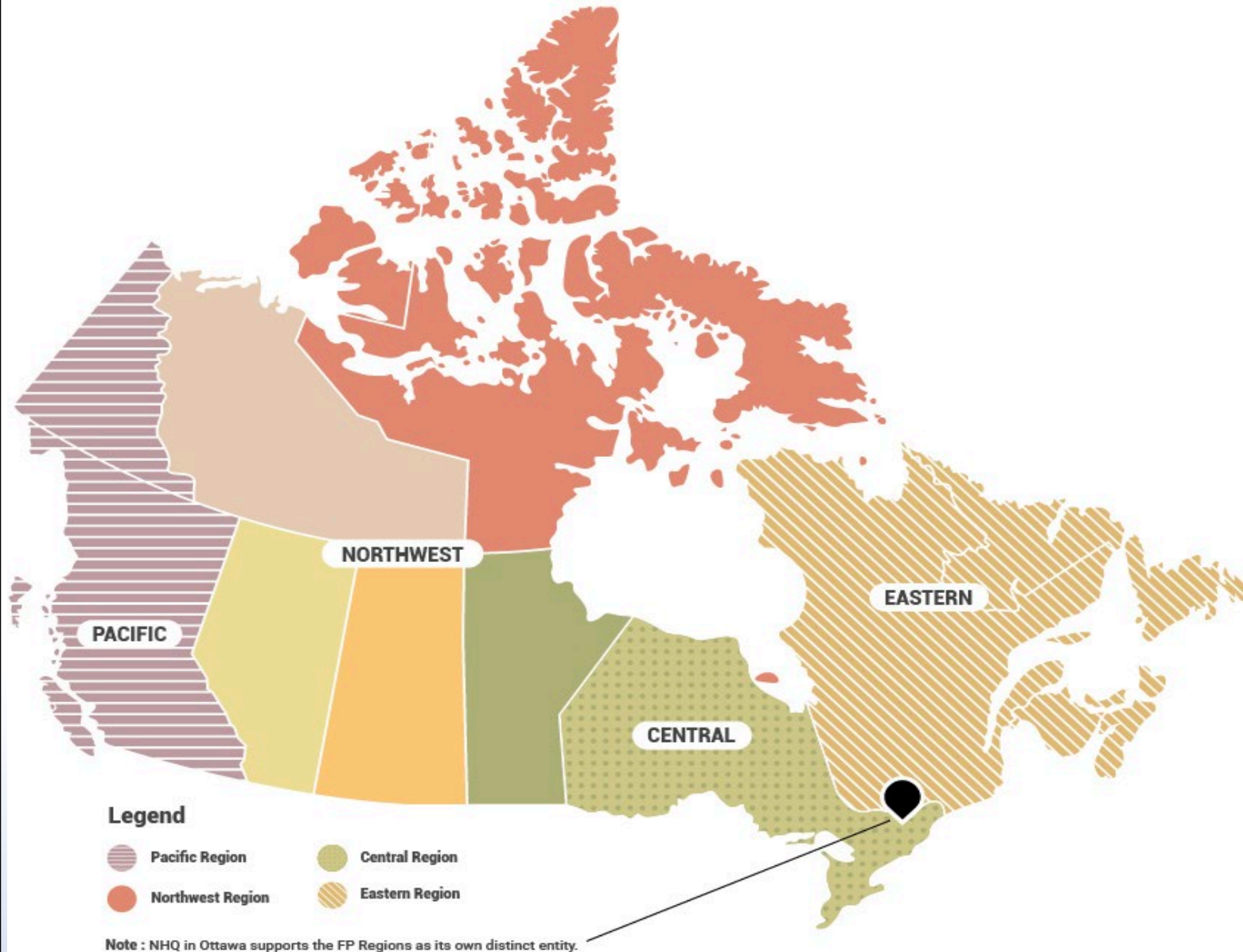


Session Roadmap



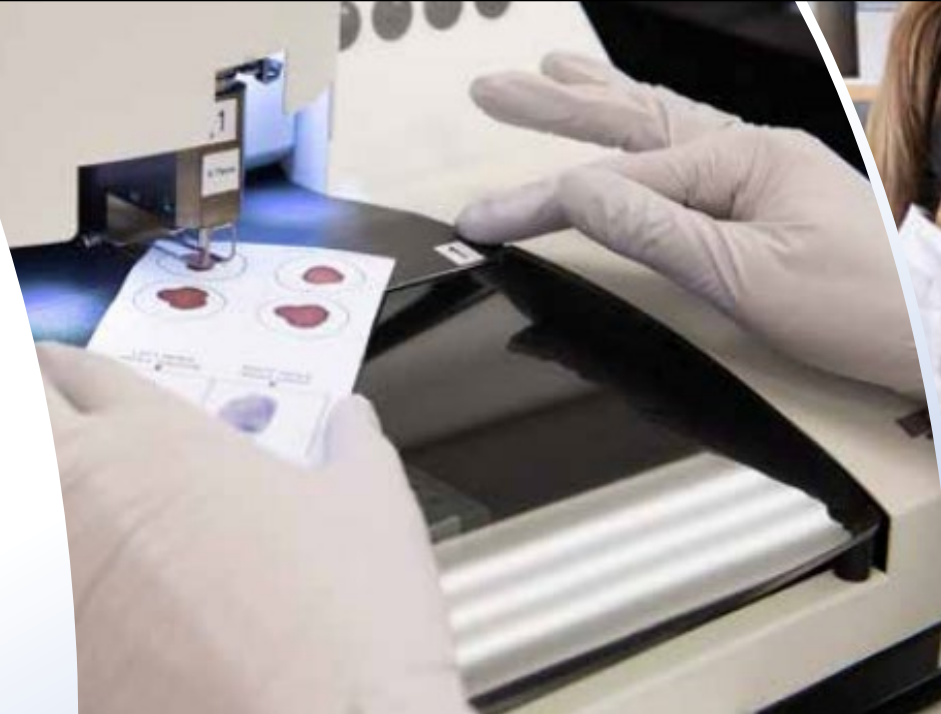


**Contract and
Indigenous policing**
(now known as
Indigenous,
Provincial,
Territorial and
Municipal Policing)



Federal Policing

Specialized services



Special O
Police Dog Services
Canadian Air Carrier Protective Program
Musical Ride
Major Events
Tactical Support Group
Emergency Response Team
National Forensics Laboratory Services
Special Intelligence Analysts
Armoury
General Duty
Clandestine Lab Enforcement and Response (CLEAR) Team
Operational Communication Centres
National Border Integrity Program
Anti-Drone
CBRN Integrated Forensics Identification Services
Underwater dive and recovery
Digital Forensics Services
Auxiliary Program
Marine Program

Before we Begin - Poll



<https://app.sli.do>

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The
questions
are:

What type of organization are you from?

Does your organization have a formal health and safety audit or evaluation program?

Is your organization part of a health & safety certification or accreditation program (e.g., COR, SOSE)?

Balancing Operational Reality and Safety Responsibility

Key Principles from “Striking the Balance” (HSE)

- Policing operates in high-risk, unpredictable environments where hazards cannot be fully controlled
- Officers make risk–benefit decisions, balancing:
 - Immediate public safety
 - Risk to themselves and others
- Risks must be reduced “so far as is reasonably practicable” —not eliminated
- Operational effectiveness and health & safety are interdependent, not competing priorities
- Decisions are made in dynamic, fast-moving situations with limited and evolving information
- Even with strong controls, residual risk remains a reality of policing
- Health and safety must be integrated into operational planning and decision-making, not applied after the fact

Safety Cannot be Assumed

Safety Doesn't "Just Happen"

Common Assumptions	Operational Reality
Operational competence ensures hazards are controlled	Competence supports—but doesn't guarantee—risk control
Experience reduces risk	Experience without systems leads to inconsistency
Heroics are part of the job	Heroics can increase exposure to risk

What led up to the Audit

National Safety Program: Timeline and where we are today



What is an audit?

An audit is a systematic, documented examination of workplace practices to determine whether they are effective, compliant, and consistently applied.

It focuses on:

- Identifying **hazards, risks, and control gaps**
- Assessing compliance with **legislation, policies, and procedures**
- Evaluating how well the processes are functioning
- Verifying that processes work **in practice**, not just on paper

A safety audit is:

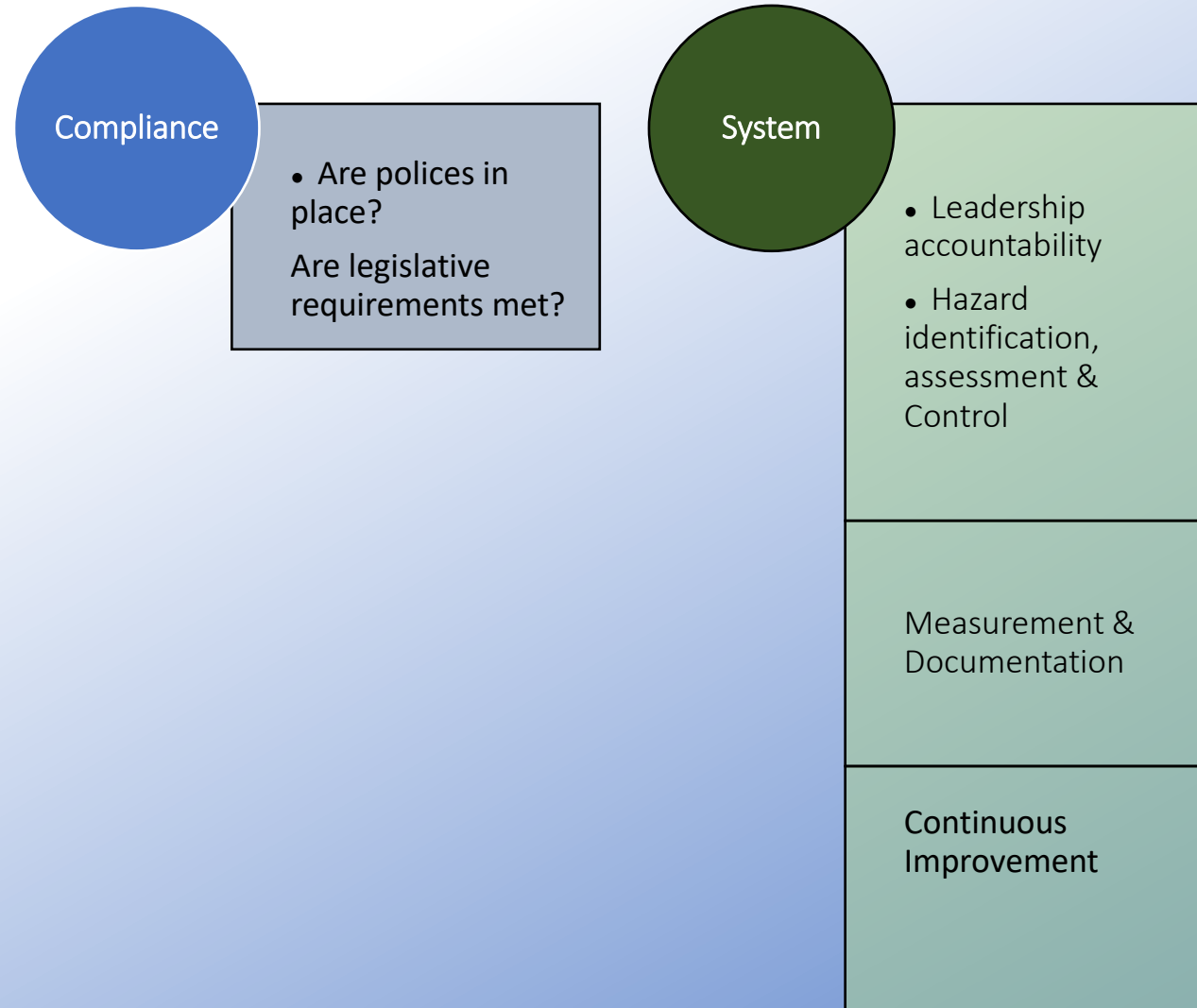
- Proactive and preventive
- Evidence-based (documents, observations, interviews)

Outcome:

- Practical findings and recommendations to improve workplace health and safety and reduce risk.

Choosing the right audit tool

Compliance Tells You *If* — Systems Tell You *Why*



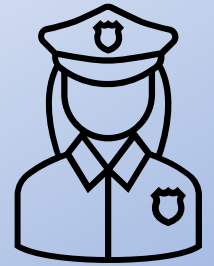
Occupational Health & Safety Oversight in Canadian Police Agencies

Provincial/ municipal Police Services

- Governed by provincial/ territorial OHS legislation
- Covered by Worker's Compensation Boards
- OHS programs compliance with regulations/ Acts
- Provincial ministry of labour enforcement

RCMP

- Governed by Federal health and safety legislation (CLC, COSHR)
- Required to implement Hazard Prevention Program
- Federal Labour enforcement (ESDC)
- Mix of employee compensation PSE/ Members



Incentive Programs in Policing

- Canadian police agencies may be able to participate in Compensation Incentive programs (\$\$) in provinces/territories where this applies.
 - Is a **voluntary occupational health and safety certification/ accreditation program**
 - COR/ SOSE examples of provincially/territorially, typically through safety associations/ recognized organizations.
 - Recognizes organizations that have implemented a **documented health and safety management system**
 - Earned and maintained through formal internal and external audits of the organization's safety system
 - Typically includes **financial incentives** (e.g. premium rebates)

RCMP CONTEXT



- Federally regulated employer
- Governed by the Canada Labour Code & OHS Regulations
- Mixed compensation systems for employees.

Why ISO45001 standard?



- Works across all Canadian jurisdictions & Internationally
- Focuses on the components of an effective Safety program including Leadership
- Supports the Internal Responsibility System
- Compliments legislative compliance

& Compliance tool



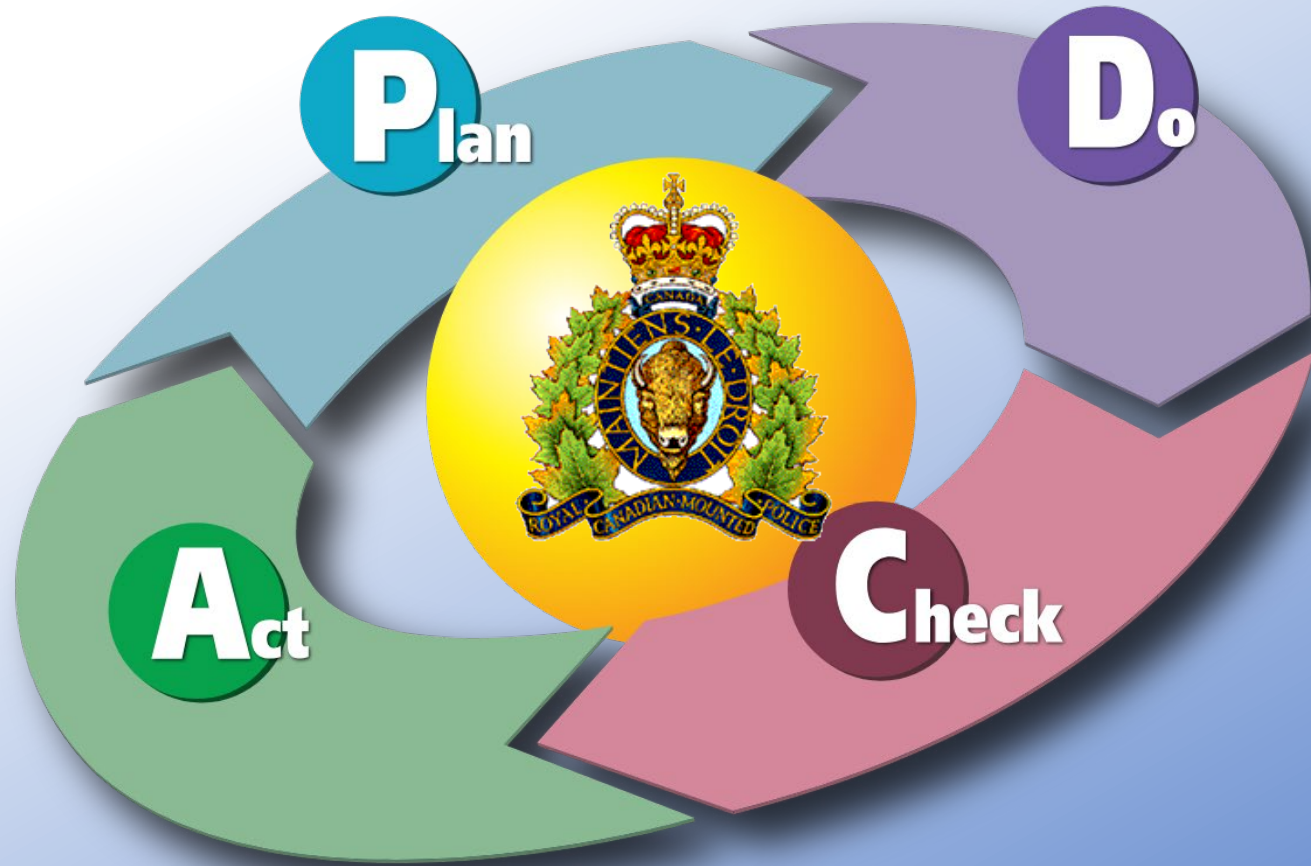
- To demonstrate compliance nationally to CLC & COSHR requirements
- To evaluate compliance with our National Occupational Safety Manual.
- Review policies & procedures are compliant
- Supports the Internal Responsibility System
- Compliments legislative compliance

Foundation of an Effective OHS System- ISO 45001

Effective OHS starts with a strong foundation:

Plan – Do – Check – Act (PDCA)

- **Plan:** Identify hazards, set goals
- **Do:** Implement controls, train staff
- **Check:** Monitor, audit, review
- **Act:** Improve, adjust, reinforce

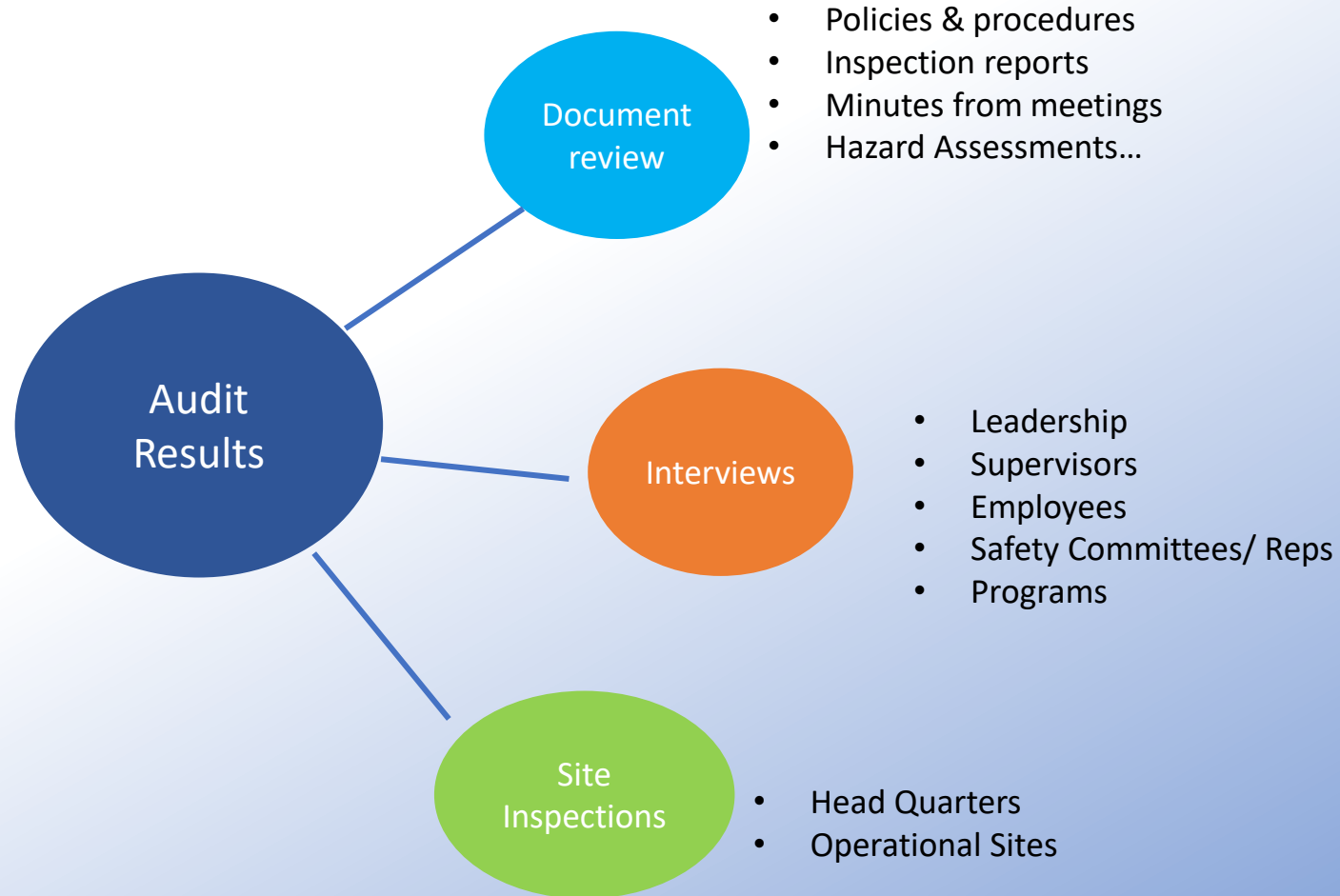


Development of our compliance tool



Number	Items	Audit Question	Positive	Negative
Element 1: Occupational Health and Safety Policy				
1	Has the health and safety policy been communicated to, and understood by, relevant parties?	1.7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Element 2: Health and Safety Committees				
2	Has the required Workplace Health & Safety Committee or Safety Representative been properly established?	2.1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Are committee meetings being chaired at the appropriate level?	2.3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Is the membership appropriate to specific committees (including alternates)?	2.5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Element 3: Hazardous Occurrence Investigation, Recording and Reporting				
5	Are hazardous occurrences being investigated, recorded, and reported on the LAB1070 as per OSM, Chapter 3.1?	3.1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Do workplace committee members and representatives actively participate in hazardous occurrence investigations?	3.6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Element 4: Internal Complaint Resolution Process				
7	Are supervisors aware of the Internal Complaint Resolution Process and understand their roles and responsibilities?	4.1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is the WPHSC/ Rep aware of the Internal Complaint Resolution		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What do you look at for auditing



NATIONAL SAFETY AUDIT

FINDINGS



Key Themes from the Audit

The audit showed that safety is present across the organization—but not yet consistently systematized.



Accountability for health and safety is not consistently defined or embedded in leadership practices



Hazard management is largely reactive, with limited systematic, proactive planning



Inconsistent application of processes across divisions limits reliability and standardization



Committees and advisors are often compensating for gaps in ownership and system clarity



Stronger outcomes are observed where structured systems and clear accountabilities are in place

Leadership & Accountability

FINDINGS

- Strong commitment to employee safety across the organization
- Variability in understanding of OHS roles and responsibilities

Opportunity to:

- Strengthen leadership accountability
- Integrate OHS more systematically into decision- making
- Establish measurable performance expectations



Hazard Prevention & Risk Management

FINDINGS

- Hazard management practices exist across the organization
- Approaches vary between divisions and programs
- Often implemented reactively rather than consistently proactively

OPPORTUNITY TO:

- Strengthen Hazard Prevention Program (HPP)
- Standardize approaches
- Improve consistency and documentation



Training and Education

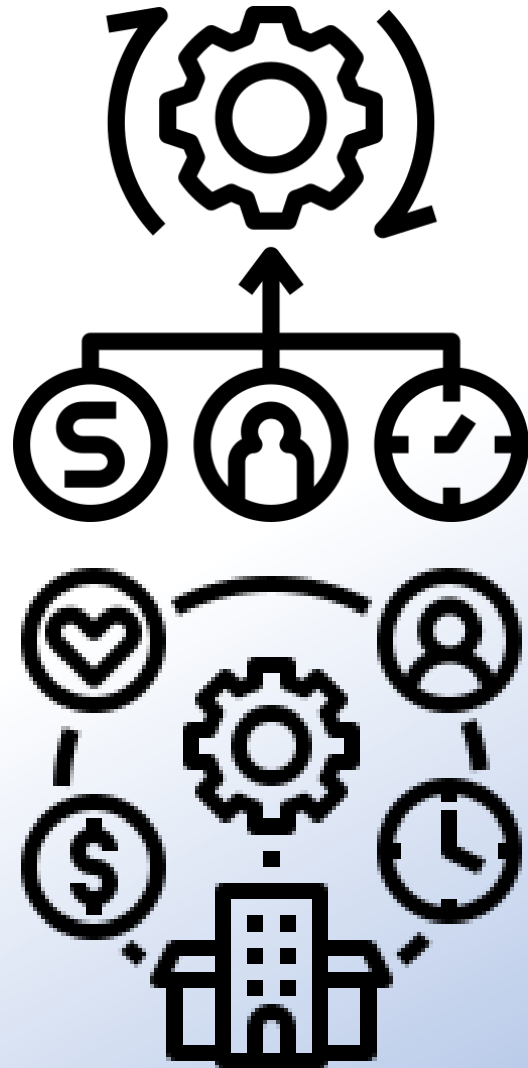


FINDINGS

- Strong training efforts already in place
- Opportunities to better align training with identified hazards
- Variability in awareness of legislative responsibilities

OPPORTUNITY TO:

- Strengthen role clarity
- Align training with risk profiles
- Improve access and consistency

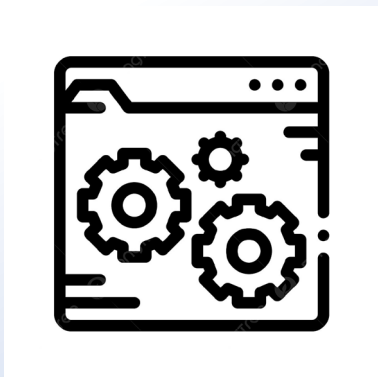


Systems, Resources & Consistency

FINDINGS

- Strong local practices supported by dedicated personnel
- Variability in resources and tools across divisions
- Limited formal mechanisms for:
 - Evaluation
 - Continuous improvement
 - Documentation standardization
- **OPPORTUNITY TO:**
 - Strengthen consistency through systems and governance

Evaluation & Continuous Improvement



FINDINGS

- Lack of a system in place to assess OHS program effectiveness to address evolving risks and regulations.

OPPORTUNITY TO:

- Integrate Health and Safety into evaluation processes
- Develop a continuous improvement plan

Technology & Documentation

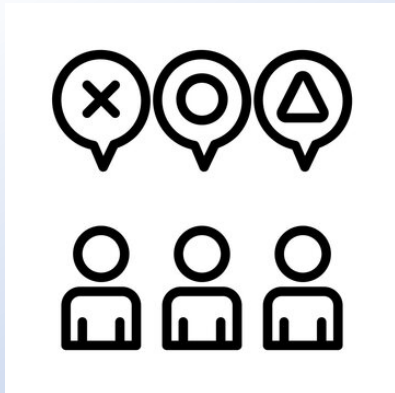


FINDINGS

- Inconsistent OHS documentation and ineffective processes in place to facilitate document entry, tracking and searching to find documentation.

OPPORTUNITY TO:

- Adopt a management system solution
- Improve and streamline documentation practices

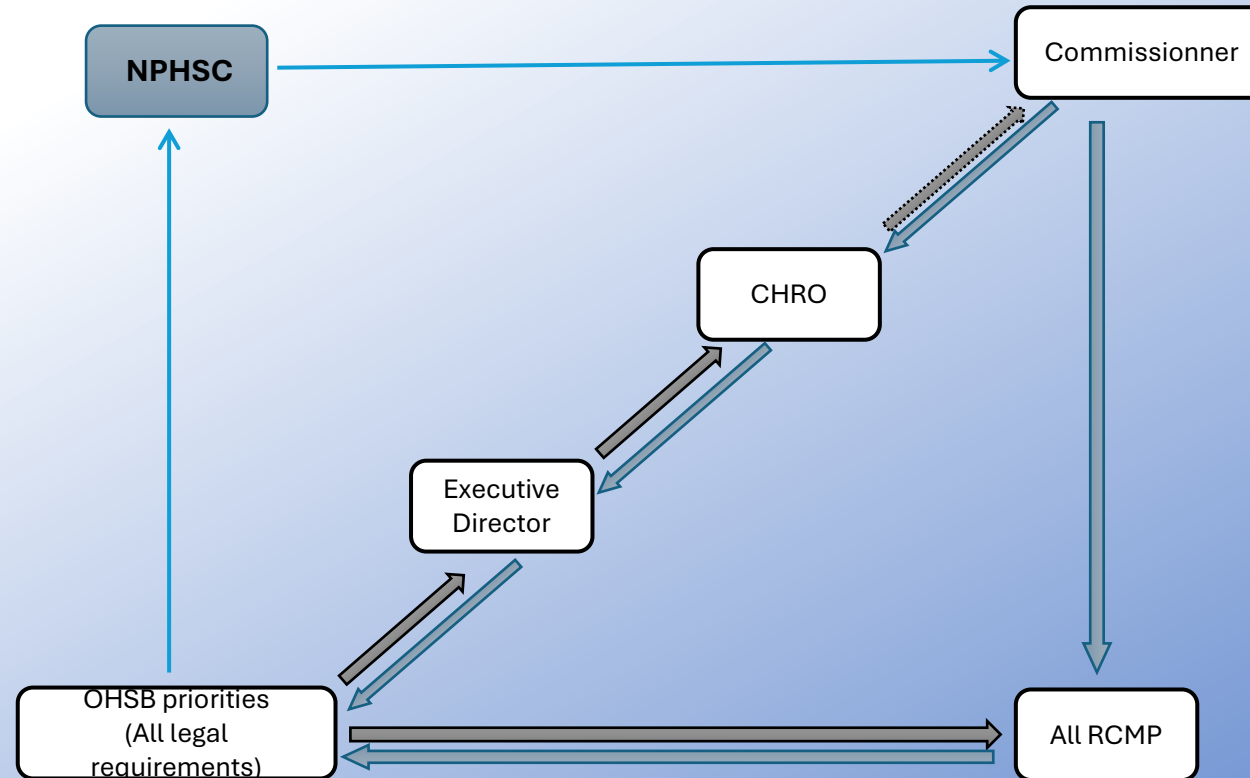


Path Forward

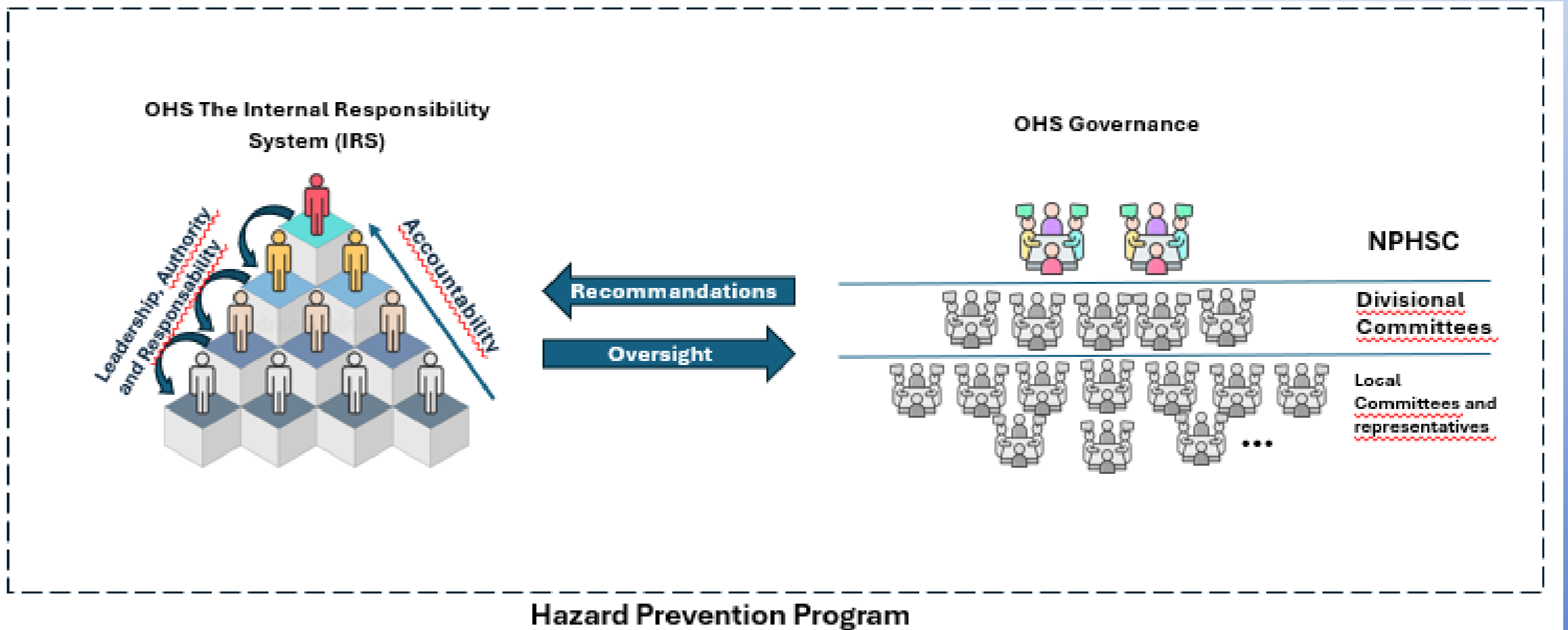


From Audit Results to Action

- Audit findings brought to National Policy Health & Safety Committee for engagement
- Clear prioritization:
 - Leadership and accountability first
 - Hazard prevention as the backbone



Accountability in an Operational Organization



IRS, governance, and HPP must function as an integrated system.

What is Being Recommended



Establish a **formal OHS accountability framework** that:

- Defines responsibilities at all levels
- Embeds OHS into leadership accountabilities
- Is supported by:
 - Training
 - Clear expectations
 - Performance management

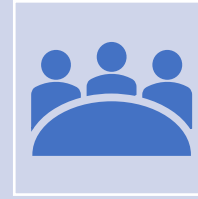
What This Looks Like in Practice

- **OHS in performance agreements**
- **Regular reporting at senior governance tables**
- **Clear functional authority (National ↔ Divisions)**
- **Senior Leadership Engagement & Visibility – Participation in OHS communications**
- **Formal, recurring endorsement of national OHS priorities**

What this Means for Other Organizations



System-based safety applies at any scale—not just large organizations



Clear accountability and defined roles are foundational



Proactive hazard management strengthens both safety and operations



Embedding safety into existing governance systems improves consistency and sustainability

Lessons Learned



Audits create clarity, not blame



Systems matter more as complexity increases



Consistency comes from structure, not individual practices



Safety must be governed like finance, risk, and operations



Leadership and accountability is the foundation for sustainable safety performance

Questions? Connect with us

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